

**The Culture of Cities**—By *Lewis Mumford*. New York: *Harcourt, Brace*, 1938. 586 pp. Price, \$5.00.

For over 15 years Lewis Mumford's writings have reflected a deep insight into the problems of decent human living as they are affected by the physical character of cities and urban housing. His latest book, widely hailed as a major contribution to the social thinking of our generation, will be of direct interest to many in the health profession for the light it throws on the relation between city building, housing, and the opportunities for an urban life which shall be not only healthful in the technical and statistical meaning of the term but vital and self-renewing in the broadest sense.

The first half of the book treats of the manner in which cities have grown since the Middle Ages, tracing (with the aid of consummately well chosen photographs) a steady decline in the fundamental human decencies from the walled medieval town to the vast, sprawling, crowded, unplanned aggregations of people and buildings, the "insensate industrial towns" of the 19th century. In a masterful first chapter which is one of the high points of the work, Mumford challenges the customary view of the medieval town as crowded and essentially unhealthful, holding it rather to have been relatively open, well-scaled to human needs and activities, and hygienically superior in many respects to the more complex cities which followed it down to the last half-century.

The decencies and amenities of living are shown to have been less and less considered as the city evolved from its primitive form through the Renaissance or Baroque city—with its emphasis on the broad avenue for military display, its grandiose architectural façades to glorify the agencies of political power—to the industrial megalopolis which sacrificed all human

decencies to the planless crowding of workers near their shops and factories.

Though his damnation of the city as we have known it is hardly to be matched for vigor, Mumford is no medievalist, no advocate of return to the hand-loom and the subsistence-homestead as the road to a durable society. He does not argue the impermanence of the great city, but rather the possibility of humanizing it. The later sections of the book review the means at hand (some of them far more highly developed and better tested than is generally recognized) for this humanization: regional planning as a background for stable urban development; decentralization of metropolitan population and of the less specialized urban functions into satellite garden cities which can support the necessary specializations of the mother city; progressive community planning and modern housing as a means of rebuilding the mother city itself—all with the purpose of giving greater dignity and permanence to the physical city, new spirit and well-being to the human beings who comprise the city, and new vitality to the culture that is the city's excuse for being.

ALLAN A. TWICHELL

**The Self You Have to Live With**—By *Winfred Rhoades*. Philadelphia: *Lippincott*, 1938. 182 pp. Price, \$1.75.

This is essentially an inspirational book, a modern version of those treatises on life, of long and honorable literary history, that have drawn on the common sense and wisdom of the ages, back to the inspired scriptural writers and the ancient Greek philosophers from whom we have inherited treasures of knowledge held valid to this day. To the precept "Know Thyself" the present author adds the injunction "Live With Thyself," positing under this concept a rule of life that draws

liberally on the findings and teachings of modern psychology and psychiatry adapted to his personal philosophic predilections. Reflecting the lessons of his own life and a desire "to pass along to other suffering and struggling people some of the things I had learned in the hard and long school of personal sickness," his essay may be said to derive from a "variety of religious experience" that gave him motive power and insight making for healthy personal adjustment of a quality and degree he confidently considers attainable by others like-minded in their grasp and acceptance of certain underlying principles and attitudes.

It is a combination of spiritual and mental hygiene that we are offered in this treatise on "how to live," which is based also on the author's psychological work in the Boston Dispensary unit of the New England Medical Center, where he has conducted classes in "thought control" and helped and advised individuals with adjustment problems. While tenuous in its psychological material, it has great value, in the opinion of this reviewer, in the attention it gives to volitional factors and in its appreciation of the rôle of "will" in human behavior, which modern psychology tends to neglect in its preoccupation with thought and emotion. Hence the relevance of religion, as well as psychology, in human motivation and conduct, as emphasized by this writer and as other psychological writers are coming vaguely to recognize. But the "return to religion" must be rooted in sterner stuff and in solidier concepts of the nature and meaning of religion than some psychologists are offering us at this time, if the mechanists, determinists, and materialists of mental science are to be convincingly gainsaid. The present author, for example, defines religion as "intrinsically not a belief, not a doctrine . . . but conscious association with the divine Spirit and

Life." This is a pale formula to oppose to the negative convictions of the psychoanalyst who regards religion as an "illusion." PAUL O. KOMORA

**Carbon Monoxide Asphyxia**—By Cecil K. Drinker, M.D., D.Sc. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. 276 pp. Price, \$4.50.

We have long known of Dr. Drinker's intimate knowledge of carbon monoxide poisoning and a profound textbook on the subject by him is a welcome and timely accession to the literature on this important subject. The work is dedicated to Oscar H. Fogg, first with the American Gas Association and later with the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, because of his untiring efforts for safety in the use of gas. It is written primarily for those who have practical concern with carbon monoxide asphyxia, and as a contribution to its intricate physiology and biochemistry. The detached point of view of both the medical investigator and the industrialist has been kept in mind. Chiefly facts, but some best theories, have been extensively culled from the literature and evaluated in relation to modern knowledge so that many authorities are cited and not a few quoted at length.

The reviewer is profoundly impressed with the care of preparation and the fine choice of language and description, which is always concise and practically never leaves any doubt in the reader's mind as to shades of meaning. The possibilities under different situations are almost invariably fully discussed, leaving few if any questions in the reader's mind. One senses throughout the strictly critical and impartial attitude of the true scientist who is thoroughly familiar with the subject he treats. The author has left the important chapter on analytical methods to Julius Sendroy, Jr., in which again one finds a masterful handling of the chief historical methods and the ac-